

Congressmen oppose coin design changes

By Roger Boye

Some lawmakers in Washington may try to water down a proposal in Congress calling for new designs on circulating coinage.

The legislation—approved by the Senate in June—would force the U. S. Treasury to put new designs on the back sides of the five basic coin types, cent thru half dollar. But some House members apparently want fewer changes in the country's "hard money."

"We've got congressmen who are reluctant to rush into this," said an aide to Rep. Richard Lehman, D-Calif. He added that

Lehman might propose an amendment "that would scale down the bill."

If the legislation were amended, the government would place—on just one circulating coin type—a new design marking the bicentennial of the U. S. Constitution. Treasury officials then would need to have Congress approve specific design concepts before changing motifs on the other four coins.

The House Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage, chaired by Lehman, was to have considered the design legislation on Sept. 26, but the meeting was

cancelled because of scheduling conflicts, according to the aide. As of Oct. 12, no new date had been set.

The hobby newspaper Coin World has called the possible amendment an attempt to scuttle the coin redesign effort. It added in an editorial that the authority to select coin designs should remain with the Treasury secretary rather than go to Congress.

In July, several experts testified at subcommittee hearings that design changes made sense. Also, more than half of the 435 House members have signed the design legislation as co-sponsors.